

THE PASSAGE FROM THE WORLD

so I beseech you now, as to what they will say to you after the council has been held, to receive them with all the sweetness that you can, pointing out to them what is necessary, according as shall seem fit to your Holiness. Pardon me ; for love makes me say what, perchance, need not be said. For I know that you must know the nature of your Roman children, how they are led and bound more by gentleness than by any other force or by harshness of words ; and you know, too, the great necessity that there is for you and Holy Church to preserve this people in obedience and reverence to your Holiness ; because here is the head and the beginning of our faith. And I humbly beseech you to strive with prudence always to promise only what you see to be possible for you completely to fulfil, in order that harm, shame, and confusion may not follow afterwards. Pardon me, sweetest and holiest Father, for saying these words to you. I trust that your humility and kindness is content that they should be said to you, and that you will not despise or scorn them because they come from the mouth of a very vile woman ; for a humble man does not consider who speaks to him, but looks to the honour of God, and to the truth, and to his salvation." Let the •Pope remember "the ruin that came upon all Italy, because no check was put upon those evil rulers, who governed in such wise that they have been the cause of the spoliation of the Church of God."¹

This letter to Urban was Catherine's last political testament. It was written on the evening of Monday, January 30, the Monday after Sexagesima Sunday.² She had barely finished dictating it, when her agony came upon her, the repetition of a

¹ Letter 370 (22), corrected by the Harleian MS., with which I read : " della risposta che v* ha fatta l' empio prefetto, drittamente empiuto d' ira/" etc. Further on, Catherine refers to an insult to the Sienese ambassador. The Sienese had attempted to make peace between the Pope and the Prefect. Cf. *Cronica Sanese*, col. 265. Augusta Drane (II. pp. 235, 236) has curiously misunderstood and mistranslated the Saint's reference to the Roman council.

² That is, if Fra Tommaso Caffarini is right in identifying it with the one mentioned by Catherine herself in Letter 373 (102), of which he does not seem certain. *Sufflementum*, III. i. (Casanatense MS. 2360), ff. 132-134.